Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0029] with the following amended paragraph [0029]:

[0029] **Fig. 9** shows another embodiment of feeder bowl 101. In this embodiment, feeder bowl 101 may comprise a plurality of sloped portions, and each of the sloped portions may be separated by a substantially cylindrical portion. For example, feeder bowl 101 may comprise a first sloped portion 902 and a second sloped portion 904 connected to first sloped portion 902 via a substantially cylindrical portion 906. Cylindrical portion 906 may form a vertical drop between first sloped portion 902 and second sloped portion 904. In an embodiment, a thickness of cylindrical portion 906 may be selected, such that a distance between first sloped portion 902 and second sloped portion 904 is about 25.4 mm (about 1 inch). Moreover, first sloped portion 902, second sloped portion 904, and substantially cylindrical portion 906 may be stationary portions, i.e., non-rotating portions, or vibratory portions, or both. First sloped portion 902 and second sloped portion 904 may gradually accelerate the fall of items dispensed by bulk delivery apparatus [[106]] 104 to feeder bowl 101. Specifically, a slope S1 of second sloped portion 904 may be greater than a slope S2 of first sloped portion 902, such that an item's speed increases between first sloped portion 902 and second sloped portion 904. In a preferred embodiment, first sloped portion 902 may be inclined in a downward direction relative to a first horizontal plane 950, and slope S1 of first sloped portion 902 may be about 9.5° relative to first horizontal plane 950. Moreover, second sloped portion 904 may be inclined in a downward direction relative to a second horizontal plane 960 which is parallel to first horizontal plane 950, and slope S2 of second sloped portion 904 may be about 12° relative to second horizontal plane 960. This preferred embodiment achieved superior performance with most items tested. Nevertheless, in yet another embodiment, slope S1 of first sloped portion 902 and slope S2 of second sloped portion 904 may be varied, depending on the type of item dispensed from bulk delivery apparatus [[106]] 104.

Please replace paragraph [0034] with the following amended paragraph [0034]:

[0034] As shown in **Fig. 1**, bulk delivery apparatus 104 may comprise a hopper [[104]] 104b and bulk delivery drive 104a may comprise a hopper vibration device 104a for vibrating hopper [[104]] 104b, so that hopper [[104]] 104b may deliver items at different rates to feeder bowl 101. Such hopper vibration devices 104a may include Syntron® Electromagnetic

Vibrators, which are available from FMC Technologies Material Handling Solutions of Homer City, Pennsylvania. Other hoppers [[104]] 104b and hopper vibration devices 104a may include the Skako Comassa Feeders, which are available from Skako, Inc. of Faaborg, Denmark.

Please replace paragraph [0051] with the following amended paragraph [0051]:

[0051] To direct items in a first direction, each door 116, 117 may rotate in a clockwise direction, e.g., about a pivot [[119]] 129 shown in **Fig. 5**; however, one door 116 may rotate through a greater angle of displacement than the other door 117, so that an aperture forms between distal ends of doors 116, 117. Items retained by holding chamber 115 may flow along an inner surface of door 117 and through the aperture in a first direction. To direct items in a second direction, each door 116, 117 may rotate in a counter-clockwise direction, e.g., about a pivot [[119]] 129, shown in **Fig. 5**; however, one door 117 may rotate through a greater angle of displacement than the other door 116, so that an aperture forms between distal ends of doors 116, 117. Items retained by doors 116, 117 of holding chamber 115 may flow along an inner surface of the other door 116 and through the aperture in a second direction. Each door 116, 117 may have a substantially planar surface or a curved surface to direct or divert items.

Please replace paragraphs [0054-0056] with the following amended paragraphs [0054-0056]:

[0054] Referring to **Figs. 10a** and **10b**, in another modification of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in **Fig. 5**, bifurcation device 112 may be replaced by a first directional gate 112a and a second directional gate 112b, and holding chamber 115 may be replaced by a first holding chamber 115a and a second holding chamber 115b. In this embodiment, door 117 may be replaced by an accept door 117a, door 116 may be replaced by a recirculate door 116a, and dispensing head 110 may comprise means for releasing items from second holding chamber 115b. For example, the means for releasing may comprise a roller 1010 connected to recirculate door 116a. Moreover, dispensing system 100 may comprise means for separating items, e.g., a first strainer ~~(not shown)~~ 126 and/or a second strainer ~~(not shown)~~ 127. Specifically, the first strainer may be operationally positioned between bulk delivery apparatus 104 and dispensing head 110, such that [[the]] first strainer 126 may prevent items having a diameter which is greater than a first predetermined diameter from entering dispensing head 110. The second strainer may be operationally positioned between second holding chamber 115b and bulk

delivery apparatus 104, such that [[the]] second strainer 127 prevents items which are released from second holding chamber 115b and have a diameter which is less than a second predetermined diameter from reentering dispensing head 110.

[0055] In operation, first directional gate 112a may receive the items which pass through the first strainer and opening 111, such that the items are positioned within first chamber 113 or second chamber 114. When first directional gate 112a receives a predetermined number of items which passed through at least [[the]] first strainer 126 and have acceptable physical characteristics, e.g., physical characteristics which are within a predetermined range of physical characteristics, second directional gate 112b is positioned in a first position and first directional gate 112a may direct the received items into first holding chamber 115a. The container then may move to a position which is substantially, vertically aligned with first holding chamber 115a, and accept door 117a then may move from a closed positioned to an open position, such that the items received by first holding chamber 115a are directed toward bulk delivery apparatus 104 and into the container. When first directional gate 112a directs the received items into first holding chamber 115a, first directional gate 112a may receive new items, such that the new items may be positioned within first chamber 113 or second chamber 114.

[0056] Nevertheless, if first directional gate 112a receives any item which does not have acceptable characteristics, e.g., physical characteristics which are greater than or less than the predetermined range of physical characteristics, second directional gate 112b may move from the first position to a second position, and first directional gate 112a subsequently may direct the received items into second holding chamber 115b. When first directional gate 112a directs the received items into second holding chamber 115b, first directional gate 112a may receive new items, such that the new items may be positioned within first chamber 113 or second chamber 114. Moreover, dispensing head 110 may orbit around bulk delivery apparatus 104, and the means for releasing may further comprise means for altering an angle of roller 1010, such that when the angle of roller 1010 is altered, recirculate door 116a opens. For example, the means for altering the angle of roller 1010 may comprise a raised portion (not shown). When roller 1010 contacts the raised portion, roller 1010 may move in an upward direction, and recirculate door 116a automatically opens, such that the items in second holding chamber 115b are directed away from bulk delivery apparatus 104 and onto a conveyer (not shown). ~~The second~~ Second strainer 127 then separates the items on the conveyer having a diameter less than the second

predetermined diameter from the items on the conveyer having a diameter greater than or equal to the second predetermined diameter. Moreover, the items on the conveyer having a diameter greater than or equal to the second predetermined diameter are delivered to bulk delivery apparatus 104. Consequently, when a batch of items is unacceptable because one of the items in the batch does not have acceptable characteristics, those items in the batch which have acceptable characteristics may be redelivered to dispensing head 110 via bulk delivery apparatus 104, such that the number of acceptable items which dispensing system 100 disposes of may be reduced. Moreover, because the items which are not dispensed into containers are directed away from bulk delivery apparatus 104, these items may not adversely affect the components of dispensing system 100. For example, the food items may not contact or adhere to the components of dispensing system 100. Further, because the items which are not dispensed into containers are directed away from bulk delivery apparatus 104, the need to clean dispensing system 100 may occur less frequently, and dispensing system 100 more easily may be cleaned.

Please replace paragraphs [0069-0071] with the following amended paragraphs [0069-0071]:

[0069] Sensing units 109 measure a physical characteristic of each item dispensed from each dispensing path 102 or channel and transmit each measurement to a control unit 128. Control unit 128 determines whether the measured physical characteristic of each item is within a predetermined range of physical characteristics for that item, or whether the measured physical characteristic of an item is greater than or less than the predetermined range of physical characteristics. Control unit 128 counts each dispensed item to provide an exact count of items dispensed from each dispensing path 102 and channel. In one embodiment of the invention, control unit 128 counts only items, the measured physical characteristic of which is within a predetermined range of physical characteristics.

[0070] A dispensing head 110 receives items dispensed from each respective dispensing path 102 and channel. Bifurcation device 112 directs items to one of a first chamber 113 or a second chamber 114 of dispensing head 110. Control unit 128 activates bifurcation device 112 once a predetermined quantity of items is received within a respective chamber of dispensing head 110, so that the items may exit the chamber and flow to holding chambers 115. If any of the items in a predetermined quantity of items has a measured physical characteristic of which that is greater than or less than a predetermined range, control unit activates the holding chamber

115 of the respective dispensing head 110 to divert the items away from a container and toward a diversion chute 120, so that the items may pass through diversion chute 120 and star wheel 118 to a rejection conveyor. Rejection conveyor transports the items to a rejection bin. If each of the items in the predetermined quantity of items has a measured physical characteristic that is within a predetermined range of physical characteristics, control unit 128 activates holding chamber 115 of dispensing head 110 to direct the predetermined quantity of items to a container chute 119, so that items may pass through container chute 119 to a container positioned at a container-receiving groove 601 of star wheel 118.

[0071] Control unit 128 may activate bifurcation device 112 to release items in a chamber as soon as an item with a measured physical characteristic that is greater than or less than a predetermined range is received in dispensing head 110. In another embodiment of the invention, control unit 128 may increment a count of a predetermined quantity of items for each item the measured physical characteristic of which is greater than or less than a predetermined range, so that dispensing head 110 may direct a predetermined quantity of items, the measured physical characteristic of which of which is within a predetermined range of physical characteristics, to a container.